

VZCZCXYZ0020  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPC #0210/01 0731704  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 141704Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY LOME  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7844  
INFO RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA PRIORITY 2104  
RUEHCO/AMEMBASSY COTONOU PRIORITY 3926  
RUEHOU/AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU PRIORITY 8859  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0537

UNCLAS LOME 000210

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

PARIS FOR D'ELIA AND KANEDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [TO](#)

SUBJECT: DONORS DISCUSS TOGO ELECTION PROGRESS

¶1. Ambassador and DCM attended an expanded donors "Group of Five" meeting on March 9 called by German Ambassador Hubert Kolb. Also present were the Ambassador of France and his DCM, the Delegate from the EU and his DCM, the Resident Representative of UNDP, the Resident Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Head of Mission of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The group listened to a presentation by Alexandre Ponyo, a UNDP elections expert, on the state of play with respect to the technical side of voter registration for the legislative elections schedule for June 24.

¶2. The EU and the UNDP have teamed up for a project called PEACE - Projet d'Enregistrement et d'Appui au Cycle Electoral du Togo - i.e., the Project of Voter Registration and Electoral Assistance to Togo. The project's general objectives are (a) the organization of elections that will be considered free, fair and transparent within Togo as well as internationally and (b) reinforcement of the capacity and the means of the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) to manage an electoral process that meets national and international standards.

¶3. The project has four specific objectives:

¶A. Creation of an electoral list that is reasonably trustworthy utilizing a computerized registration kit which collects biometric data and produces a voter registration card for delivery on the spot.

¶B. Reinforcement of the capacity of NGOs, civil society, and the media to observe national elections.

¶C. Provision of a safe environment for conduct of elections.

¶D. Building on the gains made during this electoral process to continue long term development of the CENI and civil society with respect to elections

¶4. The expected results are as follows:

¶A. Consolidation of the democratic process

¶B. A biometrically-based data base of Togolese voters that is secure and reliable.

¶C. At least 48% of the population will receive a unique piece of personal identification.

¶D. A list of the electorate that fulfills the requirements of universal suffrage.

¶E. The rights of the population as well as the voters will be respected.

¶F. The CENI will have well-trained personnel and a modern technical election infrastructure.

¶G. The political parties will be involved in the electoral process.

¶H. Election results will be gathered in near real time and accepted by the parties engaged in the elections.

¶5. Structures to implement the project at the national and local level have been agreed with the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). In addition, the EU plans to have a robust observer team in Togo for the election.

¶6. UNDP has estimated the elections will cost about USD 22,700,000 or about USD 7.70 per voter. This estimate is the fourth iteration of estimates for cost and is within the historical range in light of the conditions expected in Togo. In UNDP's experience, elections in stable democracies cost from one to three dollars per voter. For democracies in transition elections cost from three to eight dollars per voter, and countries in a post-conflict environment spend from eight to forty-five dollars per voter.

¶7. In order to keep the technical side of the election process on track UNDP recommends the following:

¶A. Confirm availability of money necessary for Project PEACE Togo via request to EU and UNDP.

¶B. Rapidly setup the pilot project.

¶C. Involve Ministries of Territorial Administration, Cooperation, Communications and Human Rights.

¶D. Chose a technical operator for the implementation of the voter registration project.

¶E. Update administrative districting to have voting districts with similar numbers of voters.

¶F. Begin preparations for awareness campaigns directed at voters.

¶G. Reinforce the decision-making autonomy of the CENI.

¶8. Comment: Post reiterates its earlier request for USG contingency funding to assist Togo's upcoming legislative elections. These elections are the centerpiece of a strategy negotiated between the ruling party and its opponents to end Togo's long political and economic crisis through a process of democratization. The EU and the UNDP have stepped up to the plate in a big way to assist the Togolese with this critical exercise, but funding for only about two-thirds of the estimated USD 23 million costs have been identified from donor and GoT resources. Even a token USG contribution, e.g., through the UN's election trust fund or using a USG NGO specializing in election assistance, will have an important symbolic impact in Togo, which has always looked to the U.S. as the world's leading proponent of democracy and good governance. End Comment.

DUNN